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Internet-Based Radicalization as Enculturation to Violent Deviant Subcultures

Thomas J. Holt[a], Joshua D. Freilich[b], and Steven M. Chermak[a]

[a]School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, USA; [b]John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY, New York, New York, USA

ABSTRACT

This work examines the intersections of subcultural theories and radicalization theories from terrorism studies to identify how they may be improved through integration. To date there have been almost no efforts to merge these frameworks, though terrorism shares common characteristics of deviant subcultures. Both are driven by ideologies that are in opposition to that of their targets. We focus particularly on the process of online radicalization to assess how subcultural research in online environments may inform the process of enculturation into a terrorist belief system. We conclude by discussing the implications of this expansion for research on terrorism and subcultures.

Internet-based radicalization as enculturation to violent deviant subcultures

Scholarly efforts to better understand terrorism have greatly increased since the attacks on September 11, 2001. Silke's (2008) analysis of published terrorism research found that 90% of the entire body of work was published after 9/11. Over the last two decades, there has also been a growth in terrorism research that takes a criminological perspective (Forest, Greene, and Lynch 2011; Freilich et al. 2014, 2015; Hamm 2007; LaFree and Bersani 2014; LaFree and Dugan 2007; LaFree, Dugan, and Miller 2015; Smith and Damphouse 2009). There is generally little consistency in the definitions of terrorism, due to variations in cultural norms, political and religious ideologies, and political relationships (Martin 2006; Schmid and Jongman 2005). At the same time, criminological inquiry has substantive value for terrorism research since as Clarke and Newman (2006:i), two esteemed criminologists, explain "terrorism is a form of crime in all essential respects." Almost all state-based definitions include the unlawful use of force or violence (Freilich Chermak, and Simone 2009; Schmid and Jongman 2005), and most terrorist suspects are tried under extant criminal codes (LaFree and Dugan 2004).

Recent terrorism research has moved beyond the definitional debate into empirical assessments of both the foreground and situational dynamics that may lead individuals to engage in ideologically motivated acts of violence. There have been some recent applications of criminological theories to account for terrorism (Agnew 2010; Freilich and LaFree 2015). Key strides have been made to identify pathways to radicalization, where individuals are willing to use violence to support their ideology (Bakker 2006; Borum 2011a, 2011b;; Hamm 2007; Krueger 2007; McCauley and Moskalenko 2011; Monahan 2012; Sageman 2004; Silber 2011 Simi and Futrell 2010; Stern 2003). This increased attention on radicalization has been fueled by high profile terrorist attacks, systematic efforts by extremist movements to radicalize "home grown" individuals to commit violence, and fears that radicalization could undermine social relationships and community cohesiveness in the United States (Bakker 2006; Simi and Futrell 2010; White House 2011, 2013). Government hearings have been held, research briefs written, and legislation introduced to respond effectively to radicalization (e.g., White House 2011, 2013).

CONTACT Thomas J. Holt ✉ holtt@msu.edu 🖃 School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University, 655 Auditorium Road, 434 Baker Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824, USA.

Recently, scholars have developed radicalization theories to identify the situational and attitudinal processes affecting an individual's willingness to engage in violence to further their extremist belief system (e.g., Bakker 2006; McCauley and Moskalenko 2011; Simi and Futrell 2010). These theories depend in part on aspects of social control, social learning, and strain/anomie that are prominent in the field of criminology. These frameworks have not, however, been thoroughly tested with empirical data to assess their applicability and value. In addition, studies have rarely carefully operationalized conceptual constructs from the leading radicalization theories or explicated their links to broader criminological theories (Freilich and LaFree 2015).

One key is that there have been almost no efforts to integrate radicalization theories with the well-developed criminological scholarship on subcultures. This may be an important oversight because terrorism appears to be driven by ideologies that are in opposition to that of their targets, whether based on religious, nationalist, or racial-based ideologies (Bowman-Grieve 2009; Hamm 1993). Terrorist belief systems often share common connections to deviant subcultures that form in reaction to or as a rejection of larger social norms to provide an alternative set of values and behaviors (Miller 1958; Young 2010).

Although much of the focus on radicalization attempts to identify foreground and situational dynamics that lead an individual toward a particular movement, there has been increased attention paid to the role of the Internet and technology as a point of exposure to radical belief systems (Freilich and Chermak 2012; Gerstenfeld, Grant, and Chiang 2003; Gruen 2005; Holt 2012; Weimann 2005). Individuals can view messages that espouse ideological beliefs through websites, videos, and increasingly through connections fostered by social media sites like Facebook, engendering involvement in extremist groups (Britz 2010). In addition, the global connectivity afforded by the Internet enables radical groups to promote their messages and recruit individuals to join their cause regardless of their location or background (Freilich and Chermak 2012; Hegghammer 2013; Holt 2012; Weimann 2011).

At the same time, close to 99% of persons exposed to radical messages never actually engage in violence themselves (Leuprecht et al. 2010; see also Borum 2011a). Thus, it is critical to understand how individuals are socialized into radical or extremist movements, and what differentiates those few individuals who are willing to engage in acts of violence against others. This work begins to fill this gap by considering the intersections of subcultural theories and radicalization theories to identify how they may be enhanced or improved by integrating them. We focus particularly on the process of online radicalization to assess how subcultural research in online environments may inform the process of enculturation into a terrorist belief system. Our investigation draws from the literatures on the far-right, far-left, and Al Qaeda affiliated/inspired movements in the United States. We thus begin to extend the field that has mostly focused on overseas *jihadist* movements. Finally, we conclude by discussing the implications of such an expansion for research on terrorism and subcultures in general.

Theories of radicalization

To understand extremist movements, we first consider how individuals join radical social groups or movements and the prospective influence of technology on this process. Radicalization into extremist movements has been examined by a plethora of scholars utilizing structural, psychological, social, economic, and circumstantial predictors. Most researchers agree that the process is multifaceted and no single factor can account for the entire phenomenon (Bjorgo and Horgan 2009; Borum 2011a, 2011b; Horgan 2009; Kimhi and Even 2006; Linden and Klandermans 2006; Taylor and Horgan 2006). One influential framework by McCauley and Moskalenko (2011) identifies 12 mechanisms affecting radicalization spanning the individual, group, and mass levels. They define radicalization as the process of "increasing extremity of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in directions that increasingly justify intergroup violence and demand sacrifice in defence of the ingroup" (McCauley and Moskalenko 2008:416).

Individual attitudes and experiences are critical when examining a person's radicalization into violence in support of extremist beliefs. Persons who are emotionally vulnerable, whether because of anger, alienation, or disenfranchisement, are more likely to transition to morally justifying violence as a tactic to obtain political or social goals (Kimhi and Even 2006; Taylor and Horgan 2006). Several radicalization models recognize the importance of cognitive openings, where a personal crisis or sense of longing leaves individuals feeling adrift and thus receptive to new world views, as key to initiating the radicalization process (Bjorgo and Horgan 2009; Blee 2002; McCauley and Moskalenko 2011; Silber and Bhatt 2007; Simi and Futrell 2010; Taylor and Horgan 2006; Wiktorowicz 2004). Those exposed to radicalized messages during this period may be more willing to accept and justify value-systems of an extremist movement and the use of violence as a political strategy (McCauley and Moskalenko 2008; Simi and Futrell 2010).

Within the white power movement in the United States, for example, there is a heavy emphasis on racism, conspiratorial worldviews, and the centralization of an idealized white identity (Freilich et al. 2014). But the white nationalist movement in the United States is fractured, disagreeing about some beliefs, and divided among distinct branches including the Ku Klux Klan, the Christian Identity movement, racist skinheads, neo-Nazis, and Odinists (Chermak Freilich, and Shemtob 2009; Freilich et al. 2014; Simi and Futrell 2006, 2010). Despite the factionalism of the movement, these branches share certain beliefs including the notion of a conspiratorial plot to exterminate the white race. This worldview is typified by a belief in a "Zionist Occupied Government" (ZOG), the condemnation of other races and miscegenation, a belief in the inevitability of a racial holy war (RAHOWA), and adherence to some form of historical Revisionism (Bowman-Grieve 2009). The acceptance of these beliefs leave white nationalists on the fringes of society and isolated from others (Freilich et al. 2014; Simi and Futrell 2006, 2010), because publicly sharing these views or actively promoting them is risky. Acknowledging membership or affiliation to a white supremacist group can lead to negative, and maybe even violent, reactions from community members and employers (Blee 2002; Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997; Simi and Futrell 2010).

There is a significant body of research examining Al Qaeda–inspired, far-left and far-right extremism, and some scholars have identified factors that predict participation in these terrorist movements. Sageman (2004) used network analysis, for instance, to study 172 persons who joined the global Salafi jihad, and Bakker (2006) replicated this study with 250 jihadists in Europe. They found that individuals became radicalized in clusters and that peer dynamics played an important role. Sageman (2004) found that many of the terrorists were linked to others in the group prior to joining, and that the groupings of friends around mosques provided key opportunities for recruitment.

Stern (2003) interviewed terrorists to better understand why individuals join certain terrorist groups motivated by religious ideology. Stern argued that group belonging was critical (see also McCauley and Moskalenko 2011) and concludes that "in some cases, the desire to be with friends turns out to be more important, over time, than the desire to achieve any particular goal. Others are attracted to the 'glamour' of belonging to a military group" (p. 5). Gibson's (1994) examination of the far-right paramilitary culture in the United States 25 years ago similarly highlighted the importance of excitement and the need for adventure. Other factors identified by Stern (2003) include the need to feel powerful and strong along with the status and prestige that comes with joining a group.

In other words, the solidarity experienced as a result of group membership may be a critical part of the radicalization process. Ezekiel's (1995) ethnographic research documented that some far-right racists set aside their personal desires and wants for the greater good of the movement. Silber and Blatt (2007) conducted case studies on violent jihadists and concluded that solidarity is usually the last stage of the radicalization process. Solidarity strengthens one's beliefs in a cause, or greater good, and bonds the individual to others in their group, and movement's beliefs. Such solidarity can be maintained or managed in interactions with others in the movement (face-to-face and electronically), by their dress and adoption of symbols, and by their willingness to protest as part of their commitment (Hamm 2002; Kirby 2007; Neuberger and Valentini 1996).

Chermak and Gruenewald (2015) recently compared individual and community attributes across far-right, far-left, and violent Al Qaeda–inspired offenders in the United States. They found important differences across these categories of offenders. Key distinctions included demographic characteristics, prior criminal involvement, and community residence. Males were more likely than females to participate in terrorist groups, but females were significantly more likely to be involved in far-left eco-movements (Chermak and Gruenewald 2015). The race and age of offenders varied across ideological groupings. Far rightists and Al Qaeda–inspired offenders were more likely to show signs of mental illness compared to the far leftists, while far rightists were significantly more likely to have criminal records. Far rightists were also more likely to commit their crimes with an organized group, while eco- and Al Qaeda–inspired terrorists were more likely to commit their crimes alone (Chermak and Gruenewald 2015). Finally, far rightists were significantly less likely than far-left and Al Qaeda offenders to live in urban and diverse counties. Interestingly, most eco and Al Qaeda linked crimes were ideologically motivated, but a large percentage of far right violent crimes were non-ideologically motivated and were committed for personal reasons such as greed.

Subcultural theories

Subcultural perspectives have improved our knowledge of how offenders account for their criminal involvement for a range of offense from gang membership (Miller 1958; Short 1968) to digital piracy (Cooper and Harrison 2001). Although there is debate over what constitutes a subculture (Agnew 1995), there are some commonalities across most definitions. Subcultures in a criminological and sociological context refer to groups with values, norms, traditions, and rituals that are odds with the dominant culture (Brake 1980; Kornblum 1997; Young 2010). Subcultures form as a response to either a rejection of the dominant culture (Miller 1958; Young 2010) or around a distinct phenomenon that may not be valued by the larger society (Quinn and Forsyth 2005; Wolfgang and Ferracuti 1967).

Members of a deviant subculture place substantive value on various activities, engaging in certain behaviors, or cultivating skills that may aid them in life (Maurer 1981). As a result, the subculture's members develop codes of conduct and rules that structure how they view the world and interact with others in and out of their subculture (Foster 1990). A special argot or slang is present, as well as some outward symbols of membership like tattoos or informal uniforms (Hamm 2002; Holt 2010; Simmons 1985). These all provide ways to measure an individual's reputation, status, and adherence to the subculture.

This framework suggests membership in a subculture influences behavior through learning processes that provide individuals with beliefs, goals, and values that approve of and justify particular types of activities, including crime (Herbert 1998). In the case of offender subcultures, the transmission of subcultural knowledge increases the likelihood of involvement in criminal behavior despite potential legal consequences for these actions. Thus, this perspective is able to explain how the values and ideas espoused by members of a criminal subculture affect the behavior of its members.

Different types of subcultural frameworks have emerged that vary based on assumptions about the members' adherence to conventional norms and values. Cohen (1955) used strain theory, for example, to explain the formation and persistence of gangs in the lower classes. Males who could not achieve status through legitimate means in schools became alienated and strained and then rebelled against the middle-class values imposed on them. These youths established an alternative subculture allowing them to achieve status through the use of illegitimate means, including non-utilitarian crimes. Cohen argued that this subculture held values in direct opposition to the middle-class values espoused by the school systems and society at large. This perspective on subculture, in other words, assumes an outright rejection of conventional norms and values (see also Sellin 1938).

Other frameworks do not require subculture members to perfectly adhere to their sub-culture's values. Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) suggested a subculture of violence exists wherein individuals

place great importance on their honor and use violence to defend it. They maintained that this subculture did not require individuals to accept or approve of its norms for their behaviors to be influenced. Anyone may use lethal violence at any time, so all must be willing to respond to this threat in kind.

Anderson (1999) similarly argues that a code exists in inner city communities that lead individuals to conform to a pattern of violent behavior on the streets in response to slights against their honor. Regardless of one's involvement in street life and its values, one could still conform to this code of behavior to safely navigate through their communities. Thus, a contrasting perspective indicates subcultures can influence behavior without requiring individuals to adhere to its values.

Herbert (1998) synthesized these two perspectives of enculturation. He highlighted the concept of "normative orders," which are a "set of generalized rules and common practices oriented around a common value" (Herbert 1998:347). An order "provide[s] guidelines and justifications" for behavior, demonstrating how subcultural membership impacts actions (Herbert 1998:347). This is a dynamic view of culture, recognizing the importance of values in unconsciously shaping behavior. Herbert derived the term "normative order" from Parsons (1937) who argued social cohesion results from the consistent acceptance of values across social groups. However, some argue this perspective portrays humans as "cultural dopes" with no agency over their behavior (DiMaggio and Powell 1991; Garfinkel 1967).

Herbert's (1998) concept moves beyond these critiques by acknowledging the impact of decision making in shaping and accepting cultural values. For example, the definition of normative order allows the researcher to consider how rules lead individuals to reflexively construct and respond to others in social situations (Herbert 1998:348). This encompasses formal written rules as well as those developed informally based on the values they uphold. Further, the concept of normative order is flexible enough to identify conflicts occurring in the subculture through contradicting orders (Herbert 1998:350). Hence, normative orders recognize that individual behavior is influenced by personal decisions, as well as through adherence to the values of a given subculture.

Subcultural research and the Internet

Regardless of the role of enculturation in the theoretical paradigm, research on criminal subcultures has provided insight into the ways individuals learn and develop beliefs, goals, and values that approve of and justify involvement in crime (Brake 1980; Miller 1958; Young 2010). Subcultural membership facilitates the transmission of knowledge, including skill sets, codes of conduct for interacting with others, and specialized argots (Brake 1980). Each of these provides ways for individuals to measure their reputation, status, and adherence to subcultural values relative to others (Miller 1958; Short 1968). This enculturation process also increases the likelihood of involvement in criminal behavior despite potential legal consequences for these actions (Anderson 1999). Thus, subcultural research can explain how the values and ideas espoused by a criminal subculture affect the behavior of its members (Brake 1980).

A great deal of criminological research has explored the impact of subcultures in a variety of contexts, including street gangs (Cohen 1955; Fishman 1995; Miller 2001), drug sellers (e.g., Adler 1993; Decker and Van Winkle 1994), and professional thieves (Maurer 1974) to take just some examples. This research has explored the relationships and knowledge shared between individuals in the real world, and has important ramifications for the aetiology of crime.

At the same time, numerous deviant and criminal subcultures have developed in cyberspace, including computer hackers (Holt 2007; Jordan and Taylor 1998; Meyer 1989; Steinmetz 2015; Taylor 1999), digital pirates (Cooper and Harrison 2001; Holt and Copes 2010; Steinmetz and Tunnell 2013), and pedophiles (Holt et al. 2010; Jenkins 2001; Malesky and Ennis 2004). The Internet and Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) methods, such as newsgroups and Web forums, allow individuals to exchange information almost instantaneously (DiMarco and DiMarco 2002; Quinn and Forsyth 2013). Deviant and criminal peers can communicate online across great

distances, facilitating the global transmission of subcultural knowledge without the need for physical contact with other subcultural members (Quinn and Forsyth 2013; Rosenmann and Safir 2006).

Most research utilizing the Internet as a venue to understand offending behaviors does not present a unified theory of why criminal activities persist online. Instead, the majority of studies focus on subcultural norms and values unique to subgroups of offenders, including computer hackers (Holt 2007; Jordan and Taylor 1998; Meyer 1989; Steinmetz 2015; Taylor 1999), digital pirates (Cooper and Harrison 2001; Holt and Copes 2010; Steinmetz and Tunnell 2013), pedophiles (Durkin and Bryant 1999; Holt, Blevins, and Burkert 2010; Jenkins 2001; Quayle and Taylor 2002), and a range of sexual deviance (Denney and Tewksbury 2013; Grov 2004; Maratea 2011; Quinn and Forsyth 2013; Roberts and Hunt 2012; Tewksbury 2006).

Many of these studies reflect generally acknowledged concepts about the Internet and its role as a facilitator for deviance and subcultural formation (Quinn and Forsyth 2013; Rosenmann and Safir 2006). The distributed nature of the Internet and the anonymity it provides users, enable individuals to connect to others who share similar interests, values, opinions, and behaviors regardless of whether the individual participates in similar groups in the physical world (Quinn and Forsyth 2013). Due to fear of legal ramifications or social rejection, some individuals may choose not to discuss their interests or activities in the real world. Technology allows individuals to connect to others without these inhibitions, and even enables individuals to explore their curiosities in an online environment without fear of detection (Blevins and Holt 2009; Holt 2007; Quinn and Forsyth 2013).

Until recently though, researchers have rarely studied the ways criminal subcultures are structured by on- and offline experiences, due to the existing literature on cultural experiences online. Initially, online ethnographic theorists argued that there was a split between the virtual and the real, and that they were separate arenas that did not impact one another (Baudrillard 1998; Jameson 1991). The detachment from reality produced by faceless electronic communication created entirely new cultures and identities separate from the real world (see Castells 1996). This abstraction led to explorations of virtual subcultures without consideration of possible real world connections (Smith and Kollock 1999).

Recently, scholars have questioned this separation, arguing that online cultural experiences directly impact our physical existences (Holt 2007; Holt, Blevins, and Kuhns 2008; Miller and Slater 2000; Wilson and Atkinson 2005). Individuals' use of the Internet is "continuous with and embedded in other social spaces" and "within mundane social structures and relations" (Miller and Slater 2000:5). Scholars have begun examining how online relationships and experiences shape beliefs, behavior, and identity in everyday life (Burkhalter 1999; Ebo 1998; Holt 2007; Miller and Slater 2000).

Wilson and Atkinson (2005) found that youths participating in Rave subcultures used the Internet to identify the location of local rave parties and become incorporated into their local offline scene (p. 289). At the same time, the Internet allowed individuals to create virtual identities and connect with others to share music and participate in virtual raves (Wilson and Atkinson 2005:292). Thus, the boundaries between the virtual and real were permeable, allowing individual identity as a Raver to be defined by both offline and online experiences.

Similarly, Holt (2007) found that individuals involved in computer hacking garnered their knowledge through experiences in Web forums and social media coupled with social relationships in the real world. Holt and associates (2008) also found that the customers of prostitutes utilize the Internet to discuss their experiences with sex workers and exchange information that enabled them to avoid law enforcement agents that would otherwise arrest the actor. Recent research has even found that maintaining deviant peer networks via social media is associated with individual deviance offline (McCuddy and Vogel 2014). As such, there is growing evidence demonstrating that involvement in online subcultures can influence behavior in the real world.

Connecting subcultural research and online radicalization

Our examination of scholarship on both subcultures and radicalization has identified points of inter-section. Radicalization is not a separate or distinct process from enculturation as a whole. At its core, radicalization research identifies the process of accepting increasingly extreme ideas that justify violent behaviors. For example, Pisoui's (2015) recent examination of seven jihadi and far-right case studies in Germany, found that illegitimate opportunity structures provided access to radical movements. These structures also reinforced certain aspects of subcultural values, such as resistance, bricolage, homology, agency, and cultural cross-fertilization. Pisoui (2015) concludes that these violent extremists were assertive and purposive agents who strategically used available cultural arsenals from the mainstream and/or other subcultures. Simultaneously though, these violent extremists were also influenced by contemporary style preferences. Pisoui calls for a greater focus on individual agency and the (sub-) cultural to improve understanding of individual involvement in political violence. Importantly though, there may not be a need for two separate bodies of theory as this is essentially the same process as the acceptance of a subcultural belief system.

There are, however, differences in the use of violence by individuals who have been enculturated into a radical belief system (Chermak and Gruenewald 2015). In this respect, the acceptance of subcultural values associated with extremist groups may be similar to the frameworks employed by Herbert (1998) and Anderson (1999): individuals may be exposed to ideas but choose not to engage in proscribed behaviors. Radicalization theories also argue that certain emotionally vulnerable or disenfranchised individuals may be more likely to accept the use of violence against various groups.

It is on this point where terrorist/extremist subcultures and those of subcultures that espouse "non-political" violence may differ. For instance, gang researchers have consistently identified a relationship between gang-formation within lower socioeconomic status environments (Cohen 1955; Decker and Van Winkle 1996; Miller 2001). Miller (1958) argued that lower-class communities with higher proportions of single parent households create a "generating milieu" in which gangs are more likely to form. In much the same way, Anderson (1999) maintains that persons residing in poor urban communities are disenfranchised and alienated from the police. These individuals rarely turn to the criminal justice system to resolve their disputes. Instead, when confronted by others they must demonstrate a willingness to use violence to minimize their risk of harm (Anderson 1999).

Individuals who use violence to further their radical beliefs do not all come from consistent back-grounds. Far-right ideologically motivated offenders, for instance, have consistently been found to be white and more economically deprived than both other terrorists and the general population in the United States (Ezekiel 1995; Gruenewald, Chermak, and Freilich 2013; Hamm 1993; Handler 1990; Hewitt 2003; Smith 1994). Members of far left groups, however, such as the Animal Liberation Front and the Earth Liberation Front, and Al Qaeda–inspired offenders include a more diverse grouping in terms of economic status, race, and ethnicity in Western nations (Chermak and Gruenewald 2015).

Supporters of these movements may not share a common point of entry as a result of class, but may instead identify with a movement on the basis of "cognitive openings" where personal crises or moments of racial awakening expose individuals to a new reality (McCauley and Moskalenko 2008; Simi and Futrell 2010). During this period differences between the individual and other racial groups or experiences are made manifest, leading individuals to seek out new ideas and messages consistent with their new worldview. In the case of Al Qaeda–inspired movements, there may also be value placed on recognizing a radical group as a form of resistance and joining as a statement of opposition to larger value systems (Gibson 1994; Stern 2003).

Although the lack of common points of entry makes terror and extremist subcultures different from those of traditional deviant or criminal subcultural research, the Internet may serve a leveling function that brings all individuals into a similar point of entry. The Internet as a source of ideological messaging is on 24 hours a day, providing relatively equal access to radical messages and networks where individuals may gain entrance to a group (Britz 2010; Gerstenfeld et al. 2003; Goldsmith and Brewer 2015; Weimann 2005). Individuals need only have a proclivity or interest and

then can seek out content on their own. The Internet acts as one of the few "free spaces" available to members of radical movements where they are able to freely discuss and share their viewpoints, materials, and plans without fear of reprisal (Simi and Futrell 2010; Weimann 2011). In addition, individuals use the Internet to identify others within their geographic location, or arrange meetings and events in the real world (Simi and Futrell 2006, 2010).

Terror and extremist subcultures share much in common with deviant and criminal subcultures that depend heavily on the Internet. Many deviant subcultures include individuals who engage in real world crimes, but communicate about their behaviors with others virtually. For instance, the customers of prostitutes utilize websites and instant messaging to arrange assignations with providers and review their services with other customers in geographically bound areas, although all exchanges of sex for money take place offline (Cunningham and Kendall 2010; Holt and Blevins 2007; Sanders 2008). Individuals in the pedophile subculture online may realize their attractions and then seek out others in communities who support, rather than shun, them (Holt et al. 2010; Jenkins 2001; Quayle and Taylor 2002). Even sexual subcultures such as zoophilia (Maratea 2011), and the bondage and discipline community (Palandri and Green 2000; Stiles and Clark 2011) use technology to exchange ideas about and attitudes toward sexual behaviors with others who do not mock their interests.

As a result, the Internet is now a critical resource that terror groups use to maintain their presence and growth over time (Kunkle 2012; McCauley and Moskalenko 2008, 2011; Simi and Futrell 2010). Online outlets allow for the distribution of white nationalist merchandise and cultural materials such as white power music or clothing that would otherwise be unavailable (Lee and Leets 2002; Levin 2002). Computers and multimedia creation software suites like Photoshop also allow groups to create and manipulate videos, photos, and stylized text. This enables these groups to develop media-friendly materials or misrepresent material facts to support their ideologies. In turn, they can promote their ideas and images to a larger audience in subtle and convincing ways to instill anger and hostility toward groups perceived as oppressors or socially unacceptable (Gruen 2005).

This issue is exemplified by the terrorist group Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which operates an English-language online magazine called *Inspire* that disseminates the group's ideology. *Inspire*'s March 2013 issue featured an article that targeted 11 Western public figures dead or alive for crimes against Islam (Watson 2013). *Inspire* also regularly publishes details on techniques to engage in terrorism, ranging from simple bomb-making to how to handle firearms. The glossy magazine format promotes this group's radical agenda in an attractive and appealing manner to readers. The writing style may also be more engaging and susceptible to those who never previously encountered this point of view (Watson 2013).

Similarly, the racist group Stormwatch operates a website about the civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This site appears to discuss Dr. King's activist role in furthering racial equality (martinlutherking.org), but its content attacks King and suggests he was actually a mouthpiece for Jews and Communists. This messaging keeps with the White Supremacist movement's general perceptions (Weimann 2005). The site is persuasively written and could appeal to unsuspecting readers with little knowledge of King's role in social change. For instance, the writers portray King as a fraud and an irreligious man and the site takes facts and quotes out of context. This website content derides Dr. King's accomplishments and argues against his national holiday and recognition. In fact, the site provides a link to downloadable flyers about these issues that reads "Bring the Dream to life in your town! Download flyers to pass out at your school." These are excellent examples of the way that multimedia content can be used by extremist groups to indoctrinate individuals into their worldview.

Cell phone cameras and Web cams also allow individuals to create training videos and share these resources through video sharing sites like YouTube (Gruen 2005). Posting videos and news stories through social media provides another mechanism to publicly refute claims from the media and government and to portray their own group in a positive light (Forest 2009; Gruen 2005). Participants in the recent Arab Spring, for instance, created videos on camera phones to show violent repression by government and police agencies, as it happened, to news agencies around the world (Stepanova 2011). Such "on the ground" reporting allows individuals to provide evidence of their experiences.

The Internet's on-demand nature means that individual exposure to radical ideas and content is limited only by their willingness to spend time online. The more time individuals spend in websites and social media may increase the quantity of messaging individuals and also enculturate them into social networks that espouse violence or radical ideas. Time spent in forums can also provide individuals with information on the argot and outward symbols of movement membership. Members of the white supremacist community demonstrate their identity through the use of linguistic indicators such as 88 (standing for HH, or Heil Hitler), or phrases such as the 14 Words of David Lane (Anahita 2006; Dentice and Williams 2010; Simi and Futrell 2006, 2010). The use of text-based identifiers is key since the lack of physical cues in online spaces require individuals to demonstrate their group affiliation in some fashion (Holt 2010).

Integrating subcultural and radicalization frameworks

In sum, our review demonstrates that there could be great value in synthesizing the deviance literature on subcultures with larger theories of radicalization. In particular, there is a need to situate participation in online subcultures as a key factor in exposing individuals to radical ideologies. Such a framework could provide a more robust explanation by specifying the points of exposure for individuals to ideologies, racial awakening, and other potential factors that enhance radicalization to violence. This would also improve our knowledge of the role of subcultural theories to understand offending generally by identifying the commonalities between extremist subcultural belief systems and other forms of deviance.

The development of an integrated theory of radicalization, however, depends on scholars better clarifying the social forces influencing both subcultural processes and their role in radicalization generally. Research is needed to disentangle the push–pull factors that may influence an individual's decision to seek out extremist movements online. It is possible that some individuals become involved in extremist communities online through a drift process (Goldsmith and Brewer 2015), wherein access to a movement is generated through loosely coupled relationships via social networking platforms and other Web-based media.

Others may, however, selectively engage in these communities as a function of exposure to belief systems in the real world through intimate peer associations or negative experiences that have been identified in various existing radicalization theories (McCauley and Moskalenko 2011; Simi and Futrell 2010). It is unclear how these different experiences may impact the acceptance of radical belief systems or eventually impact the decision to engage in violence. Thus, further study is needed to clarify the extent to which initial access to online communities may affect long-term involvement in extremist belief systems.

There is also a need to better understand the influence of offline factors in the introduction to, and enculturation process of, radical subcultures online. For some individuals, particularly in the domestic far right, an offline experience may propel individuals into online environments to seek out others who share their views (McCauley and Moskalenko 2011; Simi and Futrell 2010). It is unclear how this impacts offline social relationships, particularly if the individuals espouse beliefs that do not mesh with their peers and family. Such instances could reduce the individual's offline social network, or it could lead them to search for persons in the real world who share their views by attending rallies and other movement-facilitated events.

Offline relationships are also important with respect to the Al Qaeda–inspired persons who travel to train or participate in foreign conflicts. Recently attention has focused on Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) recruitment of foreign fighters to join its campaign in the Syrian civil war (Asia News Monitor 2014; Hegghamer 2013; U.S. House Representatives 2014). Malet (2013) argues that foreign fighters are marginalized in their home countries and are drawn to conflicts involving combatants who share their ethnicity, ideology, and religion. Cilluffo, Cozzens, and Ranstorp (2010) explain that bridge figures such as local religious leaders and veterans from previous conflicts play a key role in recruiting individuals to fight abroad. Often this occurs in real world settings (Watts 2008).

But it is also important to note that the Internet allows localized radical movements to extend well beyond their physical borders and influence behavior. Klausen's (2015) recent research on foreign fighters has highlighted the key role social media platforms have played in publicizing ISIS's message and in attracting foreign fighters to join the fight in Syria. Klausen (2015:17) concludes that "twitter is used for purposes of recruitment and indoctrination, as well as to build a transnational community for violent extremism." Indeed, relationships developed via social media and online platforms could also serve as an individual's primary point of contact, as their real world social networks may not engender connections to radical movements. Thus, the integrated approach discussed above could help clarify the specific offline and online mechanisms that are in fact crucial for recruitment into the foreign fighting community, as well as the logistics necessary for the individual to then travel from their homeland to the foreign conflict.

Such research can also improve our understanding of online deviant and criminal subcultures generally (see also Holt 2007; Holt and Blevins 2007; Quinn and Forsyth 2013; Roberts and Hunt 2012). Although individuals may spend time in online communities that expose them to belief systems, values, and justifications for deviance, there is little research quantifying how their involvement affects their social relationships in the real world (McCuddy and Vogel 2014). For some forms of deviance, such as gang activity, individuals may be heavily enmeshed in a social network of deviant peers who share their beliefs regarding offending generally (Decker and Van Winkle 1996; Miller 2001). Individuals involved in offenses that are more socially unacceptable, such as prostitution and pedophilia, may have few peers who share their interests in the real world, or would be willing to divulge their participation in a deviant subculture publicly (Holt et al. 2008; Jenkins 2001; Quinn and Forsyth 2013). Thus research is needed to investigate the impact that recognition of involvement in online deviance has on real world–relational networks and their influence on limiting or increasing participation in deviant subcultures online (McCuddy and Vogel 2014).

Research is also needed to unpack the norms and beliefs of the far-left, far-right, and Al Qaeda–inspired movements as they are communicated on- and offline. It may be that individuals who are primarily involved in offline networks may experience the subcultural values of the group differently than those whose primary experiences are drawn from online interactions. Such elaborations will refine our knowledge of both radicalization theories and subcultural theories by identifying differences in the on- and offline experience, as well as the overlap between these environments and their influence on behavior (Holt 2007; Quinn and Forsyth 2013).

Finally, there is a need to explore differences in the online communications patterns of individuals who engage in violence relative to those who simply participate in radical conversations online. Several databases such as the United States Extremist Crime Database (Freilich et al. 2014) and the Global Terrorism Database (LaFree et al. 2015) provide rich documentation of individuals who were arrested or killed because of their involvement in various crimes related to terrorism and extremism. The individuals involved in these cases can serve as a sample to reconstruct the online communications of individuals who committed an act of ideologically motivated violence. It may be possible to identify how their expressions of violence and subcultural beliefs differ from others in the same communities. This could identify commonalities between subcultural frameworks that argue socialization is not perfect, and the extent to which individual agency affects the outcome of violence. In turn, this would refine our knowledge of the role of technology in the expression of radical messages and enhance radicalization theories by illustrating points at which individuals may be more likely to engage in acts of violence based on online behavior.

Conclusion

This study focused on the intersections between criminological subcultural theories and radicalization theories from the terrorism literature. We argued that both could be enhanced and improved by integrating them. Our main focus was on the process of online radicalization to assess how subcultural research in online environments could inform the process of enculturation into a

terrorist belief system. Our investigation drew from the literatures on the far-right, far-left, and Al Qaeda–affiliated/inspired movements in the United States.

As research on terrorism continues to develop, there is a need for clearly elaborated theories for involvement in these offenses (Agnew 2010; Freilich and LaFree 2015). There is also particular need for specification of theories of radicalization, as these frameworks provide the greatest potential for strategies to keep individuals from becoming involved in radical movements. The integration of subcultural theories in radicalization theories can aid in the proper causal ordering and specification of the ways that individuals become involved in terror and extremist groups and engage in violence. In particular, the role of the Internet and computer-mediated communication in leading individuals to participate in online movements must be properly identified in these frameworks.

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Notes on contributors

THOMAS J. HOLT is a Professor in the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University specializing in cybercrime, policing, and policy. He received his Ph.D. in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Missouri–Saint Louis in 2005. He has published extensively on cybercrime and cyberterror in outlets such as *Crime and Delinquency, Deviant Behavior*, the *Journal of Criminal Justice, Sexual Abuse*, and *Terrorism and Political Violence*.

JOSHUA D. FREILICH is a member of the Criminal Justice Department and the Criminal Justice Ph.D. Program at John Jay College. He is the Creator and co-Director of the United States Extremist Crime Database, an open source relational database of violent and financial crimes committed by political extremists in the United States. Professor Freilich's research has been funded by the Department of Homeland Security and the National Institute of Justice. His research focuses on the causes of and responses to terrorism, bias crimes, measurement issues, and criminology theory, especially environmental criminology and crime prevention.

STEVEN M. CHERMAK is a Professor in the School of Criminal Justice at the Michigan State University, an investigator for the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, and Creator and co-Director of the United States Extremist Crime Database. He studies domestic terrorism, media coverage of crime and justice issues, and the effectiveness of specific policing strategies. Recent publications have appeared in *Terrorism and Political Violence, Crime and Delinquency*, and the *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*.

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